Celebrating Students: Schools Recognize Achievement in Many Ways

**When we asked our Principal Files team members to share the ways in which their schools celebrate students' accomplishments, we had no idea how many and varied the responses would be. Included: Practical ideas, food-for-thought for all school leaders.**

Schools celebrate students in dozens of different ways. They celebrate students' citizenship and creativity, academics and attendance. They celebrate daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly Recently, we asked our ["Principal Files" principals](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin050.shtml) to share some ways in which they celebrate the accomplishments of students in their schools. The ideas they shared are sure to give all school leaders some food for thought -- and many practical ideas -- for new ways to recognize their own students' accomplishments.

For your convenience, we have organized the student celebrations into the following categories:

* Weekly Celebrations Spotlight Students -- scroll down this page
* [Others Emphasize Monthly Recognitions](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin343_c.shtml)
* [Quarterly Celebrations Too!](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin343_d.shtml)
* [Honoring Academic Accomplishments All Year Long](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin343d.shtml)
* [More Special Celebrations](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin343e.shtml)

WEEKLY CELEBRATIONS SPOTLIGHT STUDENTS

"One of the things that we emphasize in our school is 'respect,'" said Cathy Finn-Pike, principal at Rennie's River Elementary School in St. John's, Newfoundland (Canada). "And one thing we do to celebrate that is to give out two PRO (People Respecting Others) Awards each week."

All week, teachers watch for respectful behaviors inside and outside the classroom. Teachers nominate students for the weekly award. The nominations are collected, and each week two winners -- one from the primary grades and one from the elementary grades -- are drawn. The winners are announced each Friday, explained Finn-Pike, who presents an award to the students and adds their names to a PRO Award poster in the school's entryway.

But what about students who are nominated but do not receive one of the weekly awards? Finn-Pike noted the importance of also recognizing those whose names are not drawn. "That's why, at the end of each month, we send home [a letter to the parents of all nominated students](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin343_b.shtml) to inform them that their child was nominated," added Finn-Pike.

"The PRO Award has really raised awareness and the frequency of respectful and kind behavior in our school," said Finn-Pike. "It has caught on here and the children really love it. One week, we even had a student nominate one of our teachers."

At Cumberland Road Elementary School in Fishers, Indiana, a program called "Count on Kids" recognizes those kids who do the right thing every day. "Classrooms set their own Count on Kids criteria, which usually involve behavior and work expectations," principal Deborah P'Pool told Education World. "Once a week, a parent volunteer goes around to each class and takes a digital picture of the class's Count on Kids. The volunteer then prints the pictures and displays them. Parents are encouraged to expect their child to be a Count on Kid, and we encourage families to stop by and check out the display."

Students can be Count on Kids every week if they meet the criteria each week, explained P'Pool. From time to time, Count on Kids receive a special recognition -- a pencil, a free ice cream at lunchtime, or another little extra. The students never know when the extras might come their way. "We do not do that often because we hope students will strive to be a Count on Kid for the internal rewards," added P'Pool.

At George S. Mickelson Middle School in Brookings, South Dakota, assistant principal Belinda Miller tells of the school's Good Kid Cards program. "When a sixth grader is 'caught being good,' he or she is given a card. The student signs the card and drops it in the designated container. At the end of the week, teachers draw a few cards and award prizes to those students."

"Our school counselors do an excellent job of soliciting prizes from local businesses," added Miller.

At Holbrook Elementary School in Houston, Texas, each homeroom teacher picks one student each week as the class's best citizen. "That student gets to go to front of the lunch line and eat lunch with special adults at the school's Cougar Cafe -- which is on stage in our cafeteria," said principal Deborah Harbin.

At Weatherly Heights Elementary School in Huntsville, Alabama, principal Teri Stokes shared a couple ways in which students are recognized on a weekly basis. "During the school year, each student gets a turn to be nominated as his or her class's Student of the Week. That honor includes lunch with me and having their names displayed in the school lobby during their week," explained Stokes.

Another opportunity Stokes uses to recognize students is the "Hobby Showcase" in the school lobby. "Students sign up, and for a week they display their collections, interests, or hobbies in the showcase," she said. "They write a short page about the display, how long they have been collecting, and why they enjoy the hobby. Over time, we have seen every imaginable hobby."

In Alexandria, Louisiana, each teacher at Alexandria Magnet Middle School for Math and Science recognizes a Student of the Week. "The student might be recognized for character or citizenship qualities, for leadership qualities, or as a role model for other reasons," explained principal Marguerite McNeely.

At Southdown Elementary School in Houma, Louisiana, students receive "Caught You Being Good" tickets. Any staff member -- including teachers, paraprofessionals, and janitors -- can give out the tickets. "Each Friday, the counselor calls for all the tickets and a student from each grade level is picked randomly to win a bag of prizes," explained principal Betty Peltier.

Every Thursday at Doctors Inlet Elementary School in Middleburg, Florida, principal Larry Davis celebrates a Very Important Child from each class. "Each class sends a student to a designated room to be told they are important," Davis explained. "They are treated to a special pencil and I read a special *Brer Rabbit* story to them."

**Click a link below to read more of this article:**[Others Emphasize *Monthly* Recognitions](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin343_c.shtml)  
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